Indian Graphic Arts from the Paul Walter Collection

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Paul Walter is one of the most significant and eclectic collectors of Indian art in the USA. Over the past 40 years he has amassed several first-rate and yet wildly diverse collections, representing a wide range of different techniques, styles and materials. His prescient eye has over the years focused on areas as diverse as Indian miniatures, Colonial silver, folk paintings, drawings, posters from the 1930s, lithographs and photography often before these fields became recognised. Rajput paintings both from Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills were one of his early passions and his holdings were fine enough and comprehensive enough to form an exhibition and catalogue by themselves in Pratapaditya Pal’s The Classical Tradition in Rajput Art (1978). Such a title implies a concentration on the main tradition of Indian painting, but Paul Walter also has branched out into other less widely collected fields of the graphic arts from India. These included Company painting and the work of British artists in India, which again were significant enough to form the core of a major exhibition and accompanying book From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India 1775-1930 (1986) by Pratapaditya Pal and Vidya Dehejia. The present catalogue contains some of the paintings that were included in those two exhibitions, including the famous street scene in Mumbai by William Simpson (1823–99).
Cosmological diagram in the shape of a female human figure
Rajasthan, 18th century
Opaque pigments and ink on paper
213.5 cm x 67 cm

Cosmological map in the shape of a female human figure. Combines the vertical axis of the world through the superimposed underpinings of the earthly plane with the yogic concepts of the awakening of the kundalini to achieve nirvana through meditative bliss.
Princess in male costume smelling a flower and standing between rose bushes under a thunderous sky
Raghogarh, c. 1750
Opaque pigments on paper
21.5 x 12.9 cm
A clandestine assignation perhaps Aniruddha coming into Usha’s chamber
Folio from a Bhagavatapurana
Surat, Gujarat, c. 1720
Opaque pigments on paper
Painting 22.1 x 18.6 cm; Folio 26.1 x 22.8 cm;

Published: Pal, P., The Classical Tradition in Rajput Painting from the Paul F.Walter Collection, New York, 1978, no. 9, p. 64

This painting comes from a widely dispersed Bhagavata Purana (originally 70 leaves) once all owned by Tula Ram of Delhi. Recent scholarship compares this manuscript to the Devimahatmya from Surat dated 1719 now in the Prince of Wales Museum Bombay (see Dye, J.M., III, The Art of India, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Philip Wilson, London, 2001, no. 126)
Abhai Karan Rathor hunting boar
Jodhpur, c. 1700-1720
Opaque pigments on paper
29.4 x 35 cm
Inscribed on verso: Abhai Karan Rathor son of Durgadas.

Durgadas Rathor (1638-1718) was the hero who smuggled the infant Ajit Singh out of Delhi and kept alive the hopes of the Rathors for the true line of the rajas until Aurangzeb died.
There are a number of paintings in this satirical style, illustrating foreigners and inspired by European prints taken from the Dutch painting of a rebus 'The World Feeds Many Fools,' attributed to Pieter Baltens, c. 1600. These are thought to have interested painters at Udaipur during the Dutch East India Company trading mission led by Johan Ketelaar in 1711-13 (Topsfield, A. 'Ketelaar’s Embassy and the Farangi Theme in the Art of Udaipur', Oriental Art, vol. 30, pp. 350-67, & Mason, D., ed., Intimate Worlds - Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection, Philadelphia, 2001, cat. 63.)
Demons Fight over a Camel's Paw
Jodhpur, early 19th century
Opaque pigments on paper with gold
Painting 30.9 x 18.7 cm; Folio 32 x 19.5 cm

Our painting is a version in mirror reverse of an earlier miniature of this subject in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1989.236.3) published by Michael Barry in Haidar, N.N., and Sardar, M., edited, ‘Diabolic Fancies and Composite Animals: Persian Poetry and the Grotesques of Deccani and Mughal Painting’ in Sultans of the South - Arts of India’s Deccan Courts, New York, 2008, pp. 102-109, fig. 1, also Kossak, S., Indian Court Painting 16th – 19th century, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1997, no. 34. Both authors are undecided between Rajasthan and the Deccan. The coincidence of colours between the two versions suggests that the artist of our version was actually looking at the Metropolitan Museum’s painting when doing this version, its subject transferred by a tracing, suggesting that wherever it was done, it had reached Rajasthan in the 18th century. A number of Rajput paintings are known of Demons (Divs) either on their own or with humans engaged in a number of activities - one such painting is in the Aga Khan Collection in Toronto, exhibited at the British Museum in 1998 - see Canby, S., Princes, Poets & Paladins, London, 1998, no134.
Two distraught women, Andhryali Ragini
Illustration to a Ragamala series
Arki, circa 1700
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Painting 19.5 x 16.7 cm; Folio 21.3 x 18.4 cm
Exhibited: Oberlin College 1971.


A Lady playing the vina, Gujari Ragini
Folio from a Ragamala series
Kulu, c. 1775
Opaque pigments on paper
Painting 21.6 x 14.8 cm; Folio 25.3 x 18.3 cm

Its descriptive verse in Devanagari on the reverse like the Mittal Ragamala series.
Published: Mittal, J., 'An illustrated Manuscript of Madhu Malati and Other Paintings from Kulu' in Lalit Kala 3/4, 1958, pp. 90-95, fig.2; Pal, P., 'The Classical tradition in Rajput Painting',1978, no 65: Archer, W.G., op. cit., Kulu, no. 32, p. 254
Other folios from this set are in the Mittal Museum in Hyderabad and in the Sidhu collection, Seattle. It is believed this set was painted by the court painter for Raja Tedhi Singh (r.1742-67) since a portrait by him with his favourite is in the same style (Archer, W.G., Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973, vol.II, Kulu, no. 31,p. 254).
The Devi, in the form of Kali, attacks the host of demons of Chanda's and Munda's armies
Illustration to a Devi Mahatmya series
Guler, c. 1780
Opaque pigments on paper
17.1 x 26.8 cm

A page from the so-called dispersed buff border series illustrating this text. For a very similar painting from the 1781 series in the Lahore Museum, see Dehejia, V., Devi the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1999, p. 49
Fakir with a dog,
Bijapur, Deccan 1600-1620
Brush drawing with colour and gold
17.5 x 10 cm

Battle between Gods and Demons
Illustration to a Bhagavata Purana series
Attributed to Manaku of Guler and his school, c. 1740
Brush drawing
Drawing 18.1 x 28.4 cm; Folio 21 x 30.5 cm

For comparable drawings from the Mittal collection, see Seyller, John, and Mittal, Jagdish, Pahari Drawings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, 2013, nos. 11-14
Naraka or Hell and the torments therein inflicted by demons with fire tongues
Guler, attributed to Manaku, 1740s
Brush drawing, in an oval shape
Drawing 18.2 x 28.5 cm; Folio 21.3 x 31.9 cm

Inscribed above in Takri script: narakam / mandaram 140 (‘Naraka / circle 140’)
For comparable drawings from the Mittal collection, see Seyller, John, and Mittal, Jagdish. Pahari Drawings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, 2013, nos. 11-14. The drawings from the Manaku and circle Bhagavata Purana series in the Mittal collection are of the same size and similarly inscribed and it is possible that this drawing also is from that series.
(Left)
Desvarati ragini, a lady clasping her hands above her head while here looking in a mirror while talking to her companions
Kota, c1780-90
Brush drawing with touches of sanguine on paper
100.6 x 56.6 cm

Large Preparatory drawing for wall painting, most probably from Jhala House, the residence of Zalim Singh Jhala within the Kota palace compound, a building that was supposedly destroyed by an explosion some years ago. This drawing is very close in style to the Umed Singh period (1771-1819).

(Below)
A holyman warmly greeting a couple who have arrived at the door to his hut
Jasrota, c. 1750
Brush drawing with colour
Drawing 19.4 x 30.4 cm; Folio 21 x 31.1 cm
(Left) Rao Ram Singh I of Kotah (r. 1696-1707) making offering of flowers to Visnu as Brijnathji, attended by his young son Bhim Singh and ladies
Kota, c. 1800, after an earlier painting or drawing
Brush drawing with some colour
36 x 25.1 cm

(Above) A princess seated under a domed canopy, female attendants either side, with a nilgau looking on
Kota, c. 1750
Brush drawing with some sanguine
17.2 x 17.1 cm
Prince and lady resting on a hunting expedition attended only by women all variously portrayed bearing arms, drawing the birds or cooking them
Jaipur, c.1800
Pounced drawing with indicative colour traces
Painting 30.7 x 19.8 cm; Folio 30.9 x 21 cm

A young prince watching a tiger devouring a bear tethered to a post
Pahari, probably Mankot, early 18th century
Brush drawing with colours on paper
20 x 40 cm
Company

Included in this collection are a number of paintings that show the influence of western styles on those of India in the 19th century.

Portrait of an Indian Lady
Lucknow, c. 1780
After a presumed painting by Tilly Kettle
Painting 21.9 x 13.7 cm; Folio 22.3 x 14.3 cm
Published: Pal, P., & Dehejia, V., From Merchants to Emperor - British Artists and India 1757-1930, 1986, fig.156.

Other versions of this painting are in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Cummins, J., Indian Painting, Boston, 2006, pl. 113) and in the British Library (Archer, M., India and British Portraiture, 1979, fig. 37).
Unfinished portrait of an English soldier
Lucknow, c.1790-1800
Opaque pigments on paper
Painting 31.1 x 22.1 cm; Folio 38.8 x 29.6 cm

A British officer probably in the Company's political service since he has been given a shawl of honour, perhaps at Lucknow
An early schematic plan of the complex of the Taj Mahal
Agra artist, c. 1805
Ink and colours on paper
Painting 70 x 41 cm
Paper with 2 watermarked dates: 1799 & 1800, and with interesting early English annotations of the different plants in each flowerbed

Exhibited 'Romance of the Taj' at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989
Published: Pal, P. et al., Romance of the Taj Mahal, Thames and Hudson, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, London and Los Angeles, 1989, no. 40. Provenance: believed to be from Warren Hastings's collection
Portrait of Sir Charles Metcalfe (1785-1846), British Resident to the court of Delhi 1811-19 and again 1822-27
Delhi, 1820s
Opaque pigments on paper
Painting 23.5 x 17 cm; Folio 29.8 x 23.3 cm
Inscribed in reverse in Persian and nagari: Picture of Mister Metcalfe Sahib Bahadur

Exhibited: ‘Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi, 1707-1857’ in Asia Society, New York 2012

Oval portrait of Begum Samru wearing a Kashmir shawl and holding a hookah
Delhi, c. 1840
Opaque pigments on paper
Painting 8.5 x 7.3 cm; Folio 17.7 x15.2 cm
Inscribed on the back: Begum Somroo of Sirdhana. Mr Dyce Sombre is her adopted son (the inscription must date from before 1851)
Provenance: Claude S. Stewart’s Sale 15.7.1860.

Another portrait of Begam Samru wearing identical yellow Kashmir shawl attributed to Jivan Ram of Delhi, c.1830, is in the V&A (03554) (see Archer, M., Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1992, no. 146). For the earliest known portrait of the Begum dating from 1812 and wearing the same costume, see Losty, J.P, and Roy, M., Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire – Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library, British Library, London, 2012, fig. 147. Apparently of Kashmiri origin, she married Walter Reinhardt, nicknamed Sombre, a mercenary who had been given a jagir at Sardhana near Meerut by Shah ‘Alam. After her husband’s death in 1778, and after coming with her troops to the emperor’s aid, she was confirmed in her jagir and became the Begum Sombre. She became extremely rich and in old age became a Christian, building a famous church at Sardhana. She led a courageous and adventurous life and appears in most accounts of early 19th century Delhi. David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre (1808-51) was her step-grandson and heir to her fortune.
William Simpson (1823-1899) was a successful topographical artist who after a series of successful images of the Crimean War, was commissioned in 1859 by the publishers, Day and Son, to produce images of India for publication. On his return he produced India, Ancient and Modern (London, 1867), a series of illustrations of the country and its people with a descriptive text by John William Kaye. He made several later trips to India as well.

Set of paintings of soldiers, servants and a dancing girl
Murshidabad, circa 1830-40
Gouache on mica with a card support in a card box
Box 12.5 x 9 x 2 cm; Mica 11 x 7 cm

15 paintings of figures on mica sheets with blank faces and one painting on card of a face against a backdrop of a house and the river at Calcutta. The figures on the transparent mica are intended to be placed over the face on the card to produce a complete picture. All in the original box.
Kalighat

Kali dancing on Siva
Kalighat, late 19th century
Opaque pigments on paper
40.8 x 28.1 cm
Six paintings depicting the Tarakeswar case
Kalighat, c. 1875
Opaque pigments on paper

This series of pictures depicts the scandalous Tarakeswar Affair of 1873, which concerned the forbidden relationship between a Brahmin priest and Elokesi, the young wife of the Bengali government employee Nabin Chandra Banerjee, who took his revenge by severing his wife's head with a fish knife. For an analysis of the importance of this episode in Kalighat painting, see Jain, Jyotindra, Kalighat Painting: Images from a Changing World, Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 1999, pp. 127-38.

The Mohunt asks Telibo to induce Elokesi to drink
44.1 x 25 cm
Inscribed on the verso: ?? The Mohunt, the priest of the temple of Tarakeswar, asks Telybow (the procuress) to induce Elokesi to drink some intoxicating drug

The Mohunt and Elokesi sitting together
43.25 x 27.75 cm
Inscribed: The Mohunt and the seduced girl tete-a-tete
Second of six paintings of the Tarakeswar case.

The Mohunt forces the seduced girl to drink some intoxicating liquid
43.75 x 26.5 cm
Inscribed on the verso: ?? The Mohunt forces the seduced girl to drink some intoxicating liquid
Third of six paintings of the Tarakeswar case.

The Mohunt fanning the intoxicated Elokesi
41 x 27.4 cm
Inscribed: Elokesi, the seduced girl, in an inebriated state and the Mohunt fanning
Fourth of six paintings of the Tarakeswar case.
The outraged husband raising the fish knife to kill Elokesi
38.75 x 27.5 cm
Inscribed on the verso: Nobin, the husband... of Elakosy, the seduced girl, when he happened to know of his wife's infidelity... (and adultery) with the Tarkassin Mohant, killed her with a fish knife (which hap)pened to be lying near, this tragedy occurred at her father's house which... just entered.
Fifth of six paintings of the Tarakeswar case.

The husband Nabin contemplating his dead wife
42.2x 25.8 cm
Inscribed on the verso: The guilty and unfaithful wife murdered and the husband calmly deliberating the action.
Sixth of six paintings of the Tarakeswar case.
Woman and Peacock
Kalighat, c. 1850-60
Opaque pigments with silver on paper
40.9 x 28.1 cm

Shiva with Vasuki in the form of a woman around his neck
Kalighat, c. 1860
Opaque pigments with silver on paper
45.5 x 28 cm
Krishna dancing on the snake Kaliya with attended by the snake's wives
Kalighat, c. 1860
Opaque pigments with silver on paper
43.75 x 27.75 cm

Durga
Kalighat, c. 1850-60
Opaque pigments with silver on paper
40.7 x 27.8 cm
South Indian Paintings

Vishnu lies on a bed of the multi-headed snake Ananta having his legs massaged by his consorts Bhu and Sri, who also are alongside him in the inset below. Brahma sits on the lotus that rises out of Vishnu’s navel at the beginning of the cosmic creation cycle

Tirupati, circa 1750
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Painting 26.1 x 18.4 cm; Folio 27.1 x 19.2 cm

The Vamana or Dwarf avatar of Visnu confronts the demon king Bali, who falls to the ground worshipping him in his gigantic size, while above the god soars away on Garuda.

Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Tirupati, circa 1750
Painting 26.6 x 18.4 cm; Folio 27.5 x 19 cm
Priests bathing the image of Sri Venkatesvara with water and a devotee
Tirupati, c. 1800
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Painting 37.5 x 26.2 cm; Folio 42.1 x 31 cm
Inscribed above with a Sanskrit verse on the merit to be gained from bathing the image of Sri Venkatesvara. Below inscription seems to name the priests attendants Laksmanji, Balaji etc.

Priests bathing the image of Sri Venkatesvara with water and a devotee
Tirupati, early 19th century
Opaque pigments and ink on paper
41 x 29.3 cm
This is a preliminary drawing for a painting such as no. 90 showing the same subject
Album consisting of 107 paintings on mica sheets mounted on album pages depicting the pantheon of Hindu gods, their avatars and their different incarnations (3 paintings missing)
Tanjore, c. 1850
Book 23.2 x 25.3 x 4.6 cm; Mica paintings varied in size 20 x 14 cm (approx)

Provenance: Inscribed as a gift to his mother in 1850 by John Robert Mackenzie who is presumably the officer of that name who served in the Madras Army from 1822 to 1875.
Vishnu's avatar as Narasimha, the Man-Lion.
Page from a Bhagavata Purana
Mysore, c. 1840
Painting 16.5 x 37.9 cm; Folio 18 x 35.9 cm

Four-armed Visnu as a south Indian icon standing between two small female attendants
Mysore, c. 1820
Ink drawing on paper
Painting 19.5 x 12.5 cm; Folio 21.6 x 14.5 cm
Exhibitions

The Classical Tradition in Rajput Painting from the Paul F. Walter Collection, 1978, (Pierpont Morgan Library 1978 to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1979)
From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India 1775-1930, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1986
Sensuous Line: Indian Drawings from the Paul F Walter collection, Los Angeles, 1976

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